

**Our family of churches** exists to glorify God by multiplying transformational churches among all people. Believing **we are better together**, our district seeks to serve pastors, church leaders and churches as they pursue this calling. In recent years, we reaffirmed our commitment to keep **“churches first”** and identified **key areas of opportunity**. This strategic plan is intended to affirm our commitments, clarify our priorities, and propose new initiatives.



## Churches First

*we will always prioritize the needs of local churches*

- Since the NCD is a family of churches, our NCD team will continue to **prioritize local church needs** over the advancement of broader district initiatives. This is what we mean when we say we are “churches first.”
- We need God to guide us, so we will **emphasize prayer** in everything we do.
- We will invest 80% of our energy in our primary services (church multiplication, pastoral care, placement, credentialing, church resources, church revitalization, student ministries, and missions mobilization) with the goal of **strengthening and empowering our churches** to fulfill their gospel-shaped mission.
- We will **cultivate strong relationships** with NCD church leaders and churches.
- We will continue to serve with an awareness that **district staff members are the best resource we can offer**. Programs help, tools are important, but it is the direct support, encouragement, and partnership of our district staff that makes the biggest difference for our churches.
- Because funding matters, we will prayerfully consider whether now is the time for our district to find a godly, principle-driven leader to serve as **NCD Director of Resource Development**.



## Gospel & Scripture

*strengthen our commitment to the Gospel and the Scriptures*

- Instead of minimizing our biblical and theological convictions in an effort to gain broader cultural acceptance, we will **strengthen our commitment to the authority of Scripture**, celebrating how our strong biblical convictions shape and enhance our lives, our churches, and the impact we can make in this world.
- Because preaching matters, we will offer another **preaching cohort in 2021** that seeks to sharpen our pastors as they proclaim God’s word.
- Our district conferences will always **emphasize the teaching and preaching of God’s word**.
- In response to recent concerns related to pastoral accountability within evangelical denominations, we will raise our expectations and expand our vision for credentialing. Put another way, **we expect every eligible NCD leader to pursue an EFCA credential**.
- We will continue to assess and respond to our current cultural upheaval, seeing it as an opportunity to **promote authentic, gospel-centered discipleship** over and against cultural Christianity.



## Leadership Pipeline

*develop and gather next generation church leaders*

- We will actively support our churches as they work to **train leaders** in internships and residencies.
- Likewise, our staff will seek out opportunities to **mentor interns and residents** at NCD churches. This practice will establish a natural pathway toward greater service within our NCD family.
- We will be proactive in **recruiting pastors** from the broader evangelical community to serve within the NCD. We will gather and recommend the best available leaders, while always honoring a local church's freedom to choose its leaders.



## Personal Evangelism

*increase our practice of personal evangelism*

- We will **develop multiple pathways** to assist NCD pastors and church leaders to grow in the area of **personal evangelism**. This is an urgent priority.
- In 2021, our district will host another **personal evangelism cohort** in partnership with *Church Evangelism Institute at the Billy Graham Center*.
- By God's grace, we will seek to establish **new gospel-shaped congregations in the urban center** of the Twin Cities.



## All People

*strengthen our commitment to the Gospel and the Scriptures*

- We will **recruit and empower people of color and single adults** to serve within our NCD family of churches and especially our district leadership teams (NCD board, multiplication team, pastoral care team, DBOMS, student ministries team, etc.).
- In light of growing awareness and increased cultural tensions, we will continue to invite NCD congregations to **lean toward issues of race and ethnicity with the gospel**. As part of this, we will host annual "Moving Toward Montgomery" trips to help our pastors and church leaders get started.
- We will embrace the goal of **doubling our number of Latino congregations** by 2025 (resulting in 9 new Latino congregations).
- In partnership with EFCA National, we will work to **bring Apex (EFCA's urban youth missions experience) to the NCD by 2022**.



## Church Revitalization

*support and resources to help our congregations thrive*

- In 2021, we will **establish the North Central Foundation**, seeking to make a major investment in our churches in both church revitalization and church multiplication.
- As part of our commitment to help pastors and church leaders experience greater spiritual and emotional health, we will work with Camp Shamineau to **build The Anderson House**, setting it apart as a place of Sabbath Rest for future generations of NCD pastors and church leaders.
- We will identify **church assessment tools** and develop a list of **trusted partners to assist established NCD churches in process of revitalization**.
- Together with our broader EFCA family, we will develop a **revitalization pathway** that can serve as a starting point for stagnant and struggling churches.